

Displaced Children and Orphans Fund: Uganda

Community Resilience and Dialogue

Implementing Partner: International Rescue Committee

Funding Period: Sept. 2002 – August 2007

Amount: \$3,200,000

Purpose: Assist war-affected children in northern and western Uganda by rebuilding traditional community and family structures and working to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS.

UGANDA

Between September 2002 – March 2005, Community Resilience and Dialogue (CRD) partners:

- Rehabilitated 7,000 formerly abducted children and adult returnees.
- Reunified with their families or resettled 5,700 formerly abducted children and adult returnees.
- Enrolled 4,500 formerly abducted children, adult returnees, orphans and vulnerable children, or victims of torture in formal/remedial educational, or vocational/apprenticeship programs.
- Provided economic development support activities for sustainable livelihoods for 16,500 conflict-affected persons including internally displaced persons.
- Promoted and supported 5,500 students to join school-based peace clubs.
- Sensitized 37,400 persons in psychological, social, and protection issues.

In addition, the CRD activity:

- Provided more than 70 subgrants to local Ugandan institutions.
- Led a reception centers standards workshop, the first-ever workshop in Uganda, designed to standardize approaches to center-based work throughout the country. Attendees included CRD- and non-CRD-supported agencies plus the government.
- Undertook an evaluation of Gulu-based psychosocial work, the first multi-agency psychosocial program review undertaken in the district.
- Promoted and supported 5,500 students to join school-based peace clubs.
- Sensitized 37,400 persons in psychological, social, and protection issues.
- Assisted USAID/Uganda's Legislative Support Activity in bringing more than 25 non-Acholi Members of Parliament (MP) to northern Uganda to review the situation first-hand and return to Kampala with the resolve to direct increased government attention and resources toward the conflict-affected areas. Upon their return, the MPs sponsored a request for northern Uganda to be declared a disaster area.

- Funded the Refugee Law Project to draft a northern Uganda conflict report, representing an analysis of the root causes of conflict. The report moves beyond recurrent suspicions and focuses on sustainable actions to resolve the conflict and its underlying causes.
- Launched weekly radio dramas across ten districts in all four conflict-affected regions, targeting over 150,000 conflict-affected persons with peace building messages.

Although it is considered one of the most stable countries in Africa, Uganda suffers from rebel uprisings resulting in massive displacement in several parts of the country. The largest insurgency comes from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), whose twenty years of attacks on the civilian population in Acholiland in the north have caused the destruction of physical and social infrastructures and resulted in long-term displacement and the breakdown of the relationships that have held society together for generations. Abductions, forced marriages, and guerrilla activity against citizens have weakened the institution of the family. Extended residence in internally displaced person (IDP) camps has broken down respect for community tradition. Socio-economic hardship and the erosion of traditional practices have undermined the authority of village elders.

Similar conditions existed in the Rwenzori region of western Uganda, where the Allied Democratic Forces have wreaked havoc on local populations. The West Nile region in the northwestern corner of the country has also suffered from insurgency and displacement, compounded by the influx of thousands of Sudanese refugees fleeing the long-running civil war in their country. Karamoja, in the northeastern region, suffers from pastoral conflicts stemming from competition for scarce land and water resources, cattle raiding, and the proliferation of small arms. Under these conditions of conflict, displacement, and the breakdown of family and community structures, HIV/AIDS is a present and growing threat in all four geographical areas.

USAID's Displaced Children and Orphans Fund supports the Community Resilience and Dialogue (CRD) program to assist abducted children, former child soldiers, child mothers, and internally displaced families in returning to normal community life as well as providing them with vocational training and HIV/AIDS awareness education. The CRD grant represents an amalgam of different USAID funding sources to Uganda, including the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, Victims of Torture, USAID/Uganda Mission funds and Trafficking in Person Funds. In FY 2005, CRD is receiving funding from USAID's Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) office to fulfill peacebuilding programming in northern Uganda. Through the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the project is funding a consortium of NGOs working in Uganda's four key geographic regions. These regions were chosen not only because they are affected by conflict and HIV/AIDS but also because they suffer from historic exclusion by the central government. IRC partners in this effort include Save the Children in Uganda, CARE International, Catholic Relief Services, and Associazione Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale (Voluntary Association for International Service [AVSI]).